

III. Remarks/Arguments

With regard to the Examiner's Amendment dated March 5, 2005 which was authorized by a telephone interview with Raymond Ferrera on March 2, 2005, claims 1, 8, 10, 15, 21, and 22 were amended and claim 27 was cancelled in accordance with the
5 above Examiner's Amendment, however, Applicant has further amended certain claims for clarification as noted in the Amendments to the Claims and as explained below.

With regard to the January 25, 2006 Office Action, claims 17-18 were objected to because of informalities. Applicant has cured these by the amendments, which were made to clarify the claims. Claim 17 has been amended so that the phrase in lines 1-2, "a
10 lock housing" reads "said lock housing," and claim 18 has been amended so that the phrase in lines 1-2 "a lock housing" reads "said lock housing."

Claims 1, 3-7, 12, 15-20 and 24 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Rafferty (6,763,691). Applicant traverses the rejections and believes that these claims and the other dependent claims are patentable over Rafferty and reserves the
15 right to prosecute these claims and others in this or another application.

However, in order to advance prosecution of the present above-referenced application, independent claims 1 and 15 have been amended for clarification as explained herein. Claim 1 has been amended to delete reference to the "engagement member" which was unclear and to include the following clarifying language (in
20 quotations): wherein said "clamping member" further comprises "a body portion," a clamp "comprising a surrounding member which surrounds at least a part of said body portion wherein said surrounding member comprises at least one engagement surface." Method claim 15 has also been amended to delete reference to the "engagement member" which was unclear and to include the following clarifying language (in quotations):
25 wherein said clamping member further comprises "a body portion," a clamp "comprising a surrounding member which surrounds at least a part of said body portion wherein said surrounding member comprises at least one engagement surface." Support for the amendment of claims 1 and 15 is found, for example, on pages 9-10.

These clarifying amendments are more clearly distinguishable over Rafferty. Rafferty discloses in FIG. 3 a jaw 38 and two flanges 30, 32. Rafferty also recites in claim 1, a jaw carried for "movement between" two flanges. Applicant has a different structural configuration with the clamp comprising a "surrounding member which
5 surrounds at least a part of said body portion" and where the surrounding member "comprises at least one engagement surface." In view of these and other limitations, Applicant's claims are distinguishable over Rafferty. Rafferty has a different structural relationship and does not include each and every limitation of the pending claims. That is, nowhere does Rafferty teach these limitations in combination with the other elements
10 of the claims as now amended.

The following further amendments have been made for clarification purposes: claim 5 has been amended so that it correctly reads "each of said apertures is an approximately cylindrical aperture"; dependent claim 8 has been amended to change "said" engagement member to "an" engagement member because the reference to
15 engagement member has been deleted from claim 1 and to change "a" body portion to "said" body portion because the reference to body portion has been added to claim 1; also, dependent claim 21 has been amended to change "said" engagement member to "an" engagement member because the reference to engagement member has been deleted from claim 15.

20 Claims 2, 8-11, 13-14, 21-23 and 25-26 were objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim. Applicant appreciates Examiner's indication that these claims would be allowable if rewritten in independent form in accordance with the Office Action. However, since the base independent claim 1 and base independent claim 15 have been amended as noted herein, their respective dependent claims are now
25 distinguishable over Rafferty with the limitations in claims 1 and 15 as now amended.

In view of the above, applicant respectfully submits that claim 1 with claims 2-14

dependent thereon and claim 15 with claims 16-26 dependent thereon are now in condition for allowance.

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Respectfully submitted,



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